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WILLIAM S. POWELL

North Carolina Historian

By

David Stick

and

William C. Friday

NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY IMPRINTS
NUMBER 10

This edition is limited to
five hundred copies
of which this is number
439

NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY IMPRINTS
H. G. Jones, Editor

No. 1. *An Evening at Monticello: An Essay in Reflection* (1978)
by Edwin M. Gill

No. 2. *The Paul Green I Know* (1978)
by Elizabeth Lay Green

No. 3. *The Albert Coates I Know* (1979)
by Gladys Hall Coates

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by Georgia Carroll Kyser and William Brantley Aycock

No. 10. *William S. Powell, North Carolina Historian* (1985)
by David Stick and William C. Friday

WILLIAM S. POWELL
North Carolina Historian

By

David Stick

and

William C. Friday

Together with Proceedings of a Banquet on the Occasion of the Presentation of the North Caroliniana Society Award for 1985

Chapel Hill
NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY, INC.
1985

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AN EVENING WITH WILLIAM S. POWELL

On the evening of June 14, 1985, friends attended a reception and banquet in the Carolina Inn, Chapel Hill, honoring William S. Powell on the occasion of his acceptance of the North Caroliniana Society Award for 1985. The master of ceremonies was Dr. H. G. Jones, curator of the North Carolina Collection and secretary-treasurer of the North Caroliniana Society, and the award was presented by Archie K. Davis, president of the Society. David Stick and William C. Friday represented the audience with tributes to Professor Powell. Their remarks, along with the response of the recipient, are published in this the tenth number of the North Caroliniana Society Imprints *series.*

85/320

THE NORTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY
honors
WILLIAM STEVENS POWELL

Carolina Inn
Friday, June 14, 1985

Master of Ceremonies
Dr. H. G. Jones, Secretary of the Society

Introduction of Head Table

Dinner

Tributes to William S. Powell

Service to History — David Stick
Service to North Carolina — William C. Friday

Presentation of the North Caroliniana Society Award
by
Archie K. Davis, President of the Society

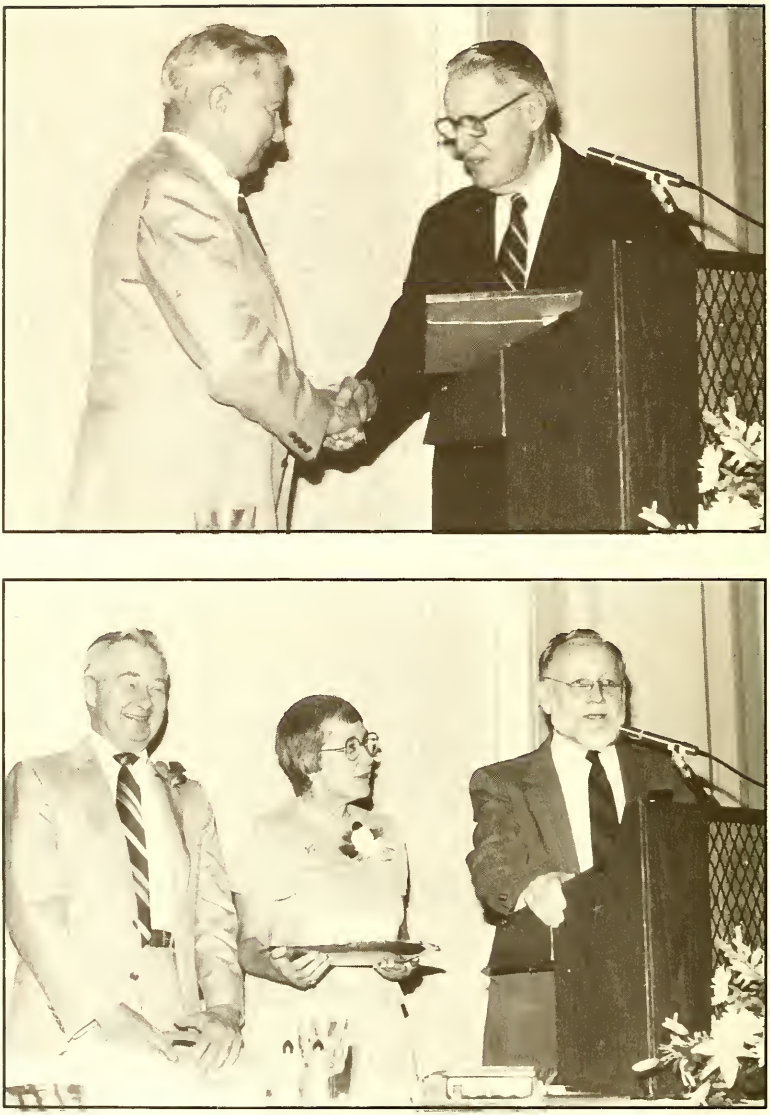
Acceptance
by
William S. Powell

The North Caroliniana Society,
in recognition of his public service and
of his promotion, enhancement, production, and
preservation of the literature of his native state,
presents its
North Caroliniana Society Award
to
WILLIAM STEVENS POWELL
June 14, 1985

Archie K. Davis
Archie K. Davis
President

H. G. Jones
H. G. Jones
Secretary-Treasurer

David Stick (top) of Kitty Hawk and William C. Friday (bottom), president of the University of North Carolina, were the main speakers at the banquet on June 14 at which William S. Powell (left in both pictures) accepted the North Caroliniana Society Award for 1985.



Archie K. Davis (top) of Winston-Salem, president of the Society, presents the North Caroliniana Society Award for 1985 to Powell. At bottom, H. G. Jones, master of ceremonies, presents a cake commemorating the thirty-third anniversary of Powell's marriage to Virginia Waldrop.

The Powells pose at top with their children (left to right): John Waldrop and his fiancée Tracey Armstrong; Charles Stevens and his wife Janet; and Ellen and her husband, Stephen Feild. At bottom the Powells are greeted by John L. Sanders, director of the Institute of Government.

Mattie U. Russell, a longtime friend, congratulates Powell at top. She too, recently retired (as curator of manuscripts at Duke University). At bottom, Bill and Virginia Powell pose with Dr. and Mrs. Roy Carroll. Dr. Carroll is a vice-president of the University.

Richard Walser (top), English professor emeritus at North Carolina State University, listens intently to Virginia Powell. At bottom, the Powells are greeted by Mr. and Mrs. George E. London of Raleigh. Walser and the Londons are strong supporters of the University's library.

George B. Tindall, who like Powell is reducing his teaching load in the Department of History, eyes William M. Geer's cane in the top photo. At bottom, Sam Ragan and Ida Friday look on as Roy Wilder (right) greets former Governor and Mrs. Robert W. Scott.

DR. H. G. JONES, Master of Ceremonies:

Friends of William S. Powell, and those who came to see Virginia:

In most organizations, a vice-president is promoted to president. But the North Caroliniana Society likes to be different, so we demoted our first president to vice-president, the office that Bill Powell now holds. Because he is still an officer, however, we must absolve him publicly from any suspicion that he may have been involved in his selection as recipient of the North Caroliniana Society Award for 1985. The truth is that the other members of the Board of Directors did not seek and would not have listened to his recommendation this year, and when we informed him of our decision, he promptly said no. He protested that he didn't belong among the company of Paul Green, Albert Coates, Sam Ervin, Sam Ragan, Gertrude Carraway, John Fries Blair, and William and Ida Friday. Besides, he feared that the Society would be embarrassed by the small number of people who would pay to have dinner with him and Virginia. It took the persuasive powers of both the board and his family to win his assent. Well, Bill, look at all of this outscouring—I mean outpouring—from all over North Carolina. You vastly underrate your drawing power.

However, some of those invited did figure out novel excuses for their absence. Being out of town is always an acceptable explanation, so A.C. Howell is in the mountains, the Dan Moores are at the beach, Lindley Butler is in Great Britain, Dick Watson is in China, and Tom Lassiter is just "traveling." Helen Wallis has just returned from Munich and is presiding over the meeting of the Society for Nautical Research in London; Judge Naomi Morris is presiding over a seminar in Pinehurst; Helen Hill Miller is involved with a memorial to Huntington Cairns in the Elizabethan Gardens; Lucile Winslow is involved in the preview opening of *The Lost Colony;* and tonight Armistead Maupin has a command performance in Washington with a fellow by the name of Ed Meese.

You have received good wishes from many others, and so have we, only one of which I will read. A new member of our Board of Directors, Frank Borden Hanes, writes, "You have greatly enriched the heritage of

our state, more than any other, and I am personally deeply grateful for your assistance in our local history series in Winston-Salem."

Before getting on with your dinner, will you let me present those at our very short head table, most of whom will be introduced more fully later.

Will each please stand and remain standing after I call the name, and will the audience withhold applause until all have been introduced.

From my far right: our speaker, David Stick; our president, Archie K. Davis; and last year's recipient of the North Caroliniana Society Award, Ida Howell Friday.

On my far left, and probably the first time he has ever been relegated to an end seat—we are very egalitarian in this Society—President William Friday, last year's co-recipient.

And now, will you join in welcoming, on the occasion of his acceptance of the North Caroliniana Society Award and of the thirty-third anniversary of his marriage to Virginia Waldrop Powell, William Stevens Powell.

Seated in the audience are the three children of the Powells, and I ask that they stand: John Waldrop Powell and his fiancée, Tracey Armstrong; Charles Stevens Powell and his wife Janet; and Ellen Powell Feild and her husband, Stephen. I also wish to recognize the presence of three of our previous recipients of the North Caroliniana Society Award, Albert Coates, Sam Ragan, and Gertrude S. Carraway.

One further thing: A member of our staff will put at each table a sheet from a guest book. Will you please sign the sheet promptly and let it zigzag to the south end of the table so that in about ten minutes we can take the sheets up and put them in a binder for Bill and Virginia. Oh, if you should drop gravy on the sheet, would you please initial the spot. Bill insists on strict historical documentation.

Now, please enjoy your dinner and your tablemates.

[Dinner followed.]

In glancing through the 1911 *Yackety-Yack* for an entirely different purpose, I came across a quotation that has special meaning tonight:

> The University of North Carolina was established to train men for the service of the State. The true "University man" understands this, and accepts his education at her hand, knowing that, if he be true to her teaching, he is to use the increased power that comes through her training . . . for the good and glory of the Commonwealth. When the State requires his services, he gives them freely and cheerfully. . . .

Seventy-four years later, we are of course jarred by the limitations of gender implied in that quotation, but are we also shocked by its substantive message? Would its implications be puzzling to students reading the 1985 *Yack?* More importantly, would its meaning bring snickers in a UNC faculty meeting?

If so, our ceremony tonight may be the beginning of the end of a tradition nearly two centuries old—a tradition nurtured so skillfully and effectively by a succession of historians whose names you will hear tonight: Swain, Battle, Connor, Hamilton, Newsome, Crittenden, Lefler, Cashion, Powell. These men associated their services for the University with their obligations to the people who paid their salaries, and they recognized no greater contribution than educating their people in the history of their state. They sent out across the state tens of thousands of students, imbued with a sense of the state's past and its present needs. Hundreds who sat in North Carolina history classes on this campus became legislators, state officials, some of them governors, who constituted for this University a powerful supporting force and for our state a powerful and progressive leadership.

Ten years from now, how many legislators will have taken a course in North Carolina history on this campus? I raise the question because of this alarming set of statistics: In the Spring semester of 1973—one semester only—the four sections of North Carolina history enrolled 584 students, about 12 percent of the total number of students signed up for all undergraduate history courses on the campus. According to the latest *Carolina Course Review,* in the fall of 1985 there will be one section of North Carolina history limited to 80 seats. Just 14 percent of the enrollment twelve years ago. No matter how many students may wish to take a course in the history of their state next fall, only 80 will be permitted to enroll. An 86 percent drop in a dozen years.

If, as the recent behavior of the General Assembly may indicate, the University is experiencing a diminution of its influence among our law- and budget-makers, our academic leaders may not be entirely blameless if they ignore the lessons of the past. The influence of teachers of North Carolina history such as Connor, Hamilton, Newsome, Lefler, and Powell not only went out across the state through their students; they themselves went out, feeling at home at innumerable meetings, making thousands of talks on Tar Heel (two words, please) history to not just professional groups but local historical associations, farmers' gatherings, labor unions, civic clubs, women's organizations, family reunions, and school groups, and in recent times, on radio and television. And they were not strangers to the country store or the village drugstore. It has been said, perhaps only slightly exaggeratedly, that Bill Powell can walk through every county of North Carolina and spend the night with a former student or with someone who has presided over a meeting at which he was the speaker, almost always without honorarium and often without reimbursement for the cost of gasoline.

Times have changed, of course, but the needs of the University in the hearts of our people have not changed. The sense of mission that drove Swain and his successor collectors and historians must not be lost in our Department of History, or it, for the first time in the University's long life, will become a stranger to the people who provide its financial support. Let Bill Powell not be the last historical missionary to the people of North Carolina. Don't let the position that he is vacating remain vacant longer than it takes to find a successor, who, "When the State requires his [or her] services," gives them freely and cheerfully.

End of sermon.

You will hear from only one David Stick tonight, so I shall restrict my introduction to just one of the David Sticks that I have known for a third of a century. Newspaperman, editor, radio reporter, craft shop operator, dance hall and motel entrepreneur, realtor, developer (yet an environmentalist), civic leader, county official—those descriptive nouns suggest the range of his activities. But he is here tonight as an author and historian. He speaks for the legion of North Carolinians who are beneficiaries of the work of Bill Powell.

David began his writing career on a novel. He never finished it, for he soon learned that truth is stranger and more fascinating than fiction. Thirty years ago he told a reporter, "I feel it's possible to present history in written form so that it is at the same time completely factual and as interesting to the average reader as a novel, short story or movie." With his books, starting in 1949, he has demonstrated that a talent for writing, coupled with adherence to strict scholarly standards of research, can indeed make history interesting. For example, the University of North Carolina Press has published four of his books *(Graveyard of the Atlantic,* 1952; *Outer Banks of North Carolina,* 1958; *Artist's Catch: Watercolors,* 1981; and *Roanoke Island, the Beginnings of English America,* 1983), and all four are still in print, a record probably held by no one else. He is also a bookman. For years he operated the largest out-of-print North Caroliniana shop in the state, and when other business activities forced him to give it up, he kept at least one copy of everything and added it to his personal library, which now is the largest private collection of North Caroliniana, housed in a standard library facility around which he built his home in Southern Shores.

As chairman of the scholarly activities committee of the Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, David was influential in promoting a new edition of *The Colonial Records of North Carolina,* all three of whose editors are here tonight. He was appointed by Governor Moore to chair the Legislative Committee to Study Library Support in the State of North Carolina and by Governor Holshouser to chair the Coastal Resources Commission.

When Governor Hunt gave me the unprecedented privilege of choosing the other members of America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee, I put David Stick's name second only to that of Paul Green, for I knew that little could be accomplished on the Outer Banks without his enthusiasm. For the quadricentennial, he has written the enormously popular book, *Roanoke Island, the Beginnings of English America,* and a series of folders on the Algonkians. Equally important, he has been a sort of keeper of the faith by holding the Anniversary Committee to a serious, dignified commemoration, one that will leave behind substantive accomplishments.

Few people know Bill Powell better than does David Stick, and he will tell us about the recipient of the North Caroliniana Society Award. David Stick.

BILL POWELL'S SERVICE TO HISTORY

By David Stick

It is quite possible that I was responsible for Bill Powell embarking on a successful career as a teacher of North Carolina history.

Our paths first crossed thirty-five years or so ago when Bill was writing the text for highway markers under the tutelage of Chris Crittenden in Raleigh and I was gathering material for a book on North Carolina coastal history. It was apparent from the outset that we had much in common. Both Bill and I were born in 1919. Both had attended the University in the late 1930s. Both had done stints as newspaper reporters. Both had spent considerable time during World War Two wandering around the Pacific. And both of us were devout Tar Heels—Bill by birth, and me by adoption.

There were some noticeable differences, however. Whereas Bill had already embarked on a lifetime crusade to convince the uninformed that Tar and Heel are separate words when used to identify the northern part of Carolina, I always seemed to have trouble figuring out whether to write it as one word or two. There were differences, also, in our academic background. After earning a degree in history from the University, and another in Library Science, Bill had gone on to do graduate work under Hugh Lefler, and was thus qualified already as a professional historian. My entire experience with higher education, on the other hand, consisted of a single year in Chapel Hill, devoid of exposure to instruction in North Carolina history. Yet, a decade later I was the one writing books on North Carolina history, while Bill was turning out three and four sentence tomes for historical highway markers. But Bill was the smart one. He was being paid for his work, while I was not.

Bill Powell was fortunate to have received his instruction in North Carolina history under the direction of the likes of Hugh Lefler and Chris Crittenden. So was I. Each of these eminent professionals had taken me under his wing, offering guidance and advice as I delved deeper into the history of coastal North Carolina. I am certain, now, that neither of them

realized how little I knew of the historian's craft, for I had learned early on to bluff my way, nodding sagely when they spoke of events in North Carolina history of which I had absolutely no understanding or knowledge. I suppose I had inherited this ability from my mother, who, though stone deaf, had developed an amazing ability to nod her head, or shake it, at the appropriate time. The only trouble was that on occasion I have seen her nod her head when she should have shaken it, or shake when she should have nodded, and there are times still when I can't help wondering if I ever made the same mistake with Lefler or Crittenden.

Hugh Talmage Lefler and Charles Christopher Crittenden were older men, revered mentors, in whose presence my primary efforts were directed toward shielding from them the extent of my ignorance. Bill Powell, on the other hand, was a contemporary; unassuming, mild mannered, and willing at all times to indulge the incessant monolgues of a garrulous Outer Banker. I suppose it is only natural for talkers to like listeners; and I liked Bill Powell from the moment I met him. I felt comfortable in his presence, as one does with an equal, for it was years before I began to understand the extent to which his knowledge exceeded my own.

Hugh Lefler and Chris Crittenden knew that I had served time as a newspaper editor, and later as a magazine editor. There was no way I could possibly let them know that somewhere in the educational process I had failed to learn the basic rules of grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation, and was unable even to define an infinitive, let alone determine whether or not it should be split. But I had no reservations about revealing my shortcomings to Bill Powell, for Bill, then and now, was the kind of person to whom one can confide his deepest secrets with full confidence that such knowledge would never be revealed to others.

If you have wondered what all of this has to do with my opening statement that I may have been responsible for Bill Powell's embarking on a successful career as a history teacher, it is simply this: Bill taught me to understand North Carolina history. He impressed on me the absolute necessity of making clear to my readers the difference between conjecture and fact. Somehow, as a result, I became accepted as an authority on North Carolina history. And at some point in his career, I am convinced, Bill Powell reasoned that if he could teach North Carolina history to David Stick he could teach it to anyone.

Bill credits his grandmother with being the first to generate in him an interest in North Carolina history, but it was a shaky start. In the afternoons, when little Billy returned home from school, Grandmother Powell was usually waiting for him, invariably asking the boy to tell her what he had learned that day. It was a put-up job, really, for Grandmother was a sly one, and after listening him out she would always say: "Come sit on my lap and let me tell you what the Yankees did in Duplin County."

Grandmother Powell was a good storyteller, and Bill was fascinated with her accounts of the burning of homes and crops by Sherman's marauding troops. But he was confused, especially about the minerals. The villain in the stories was the man his grandmother referred to, and always with an appropriate sneer, as "Mr. Lincoln." This was the same man whose likeness appeared on newly minted pennies. But Billy Powell knew that pennies were made of copper. Why, then, was the war for which Lincoln was responsible known as "The Silver War."

Once that hurdle was passed, and Bill understood that his grandmother was talking about the Civil War rather than the Silver War, it all made a lot more sense. And in later years, when historian William S. Powell has been chastised for referring to the Civil War instead of The War Between The States, his response has always been that his grandmother called it The Civil War, and if she had suffered through it and still called it The Civil War, then he saw no reason why the rest of us shouldn't call it that also.

Grandmother Powell whetted Bill's appetite for history. His mother and father fed it. Among his earliest and most treasured recollections are family trips to different parts of his native state, always arranged so that the high spot was a visit to some site of historic significance. Thus his first exposure to North Carolina history was not in reading the accounts in history books, in those days often excruciatingly dull and uninteresting, but in actually visiting the sites where historic events had taken place.

One of the visits, in 1937, was to Manteo and Roanoke Island to see the play Paul Green had written to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the so-called Lost Colony, and the birth of Virginia Dare. As he sat in Waterside Theatre that evening, on the very site of the events being depicted on stage, witnessing the debut of the new art form Paul Green described as symphonic drama, could Bill possibly have

dreamed that in time he would become one of the leading authorities on the Raleigh colonization efforts; that he would serve for decades as official historian of the Roanoke Island Historical Association, producer of The Lost Colony; and that he would be a prime mover, as a member of America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee, in planning an appropriate commemoration of the quadricentennial of the Roanoke Island settlement effort?

If you took the time to read carefully the invitation to this affair you know that we are here not only to pay tribute to Bill Powell, but to celebrate the thirty-third anniversary of the marriage of William S. Powell and Virginia Waldrop, a one-time librarian, late of Raleigh; and it brings to mind a tantalizing question. Is it possible for a man, through calculation and design, to determine in advance exactly whom he will fall in love with? If so, then Bill Powell succeeded to a higher degree than anyone I have ever encountered.

Virginia's name does not appear as co-author or co-editor on any of Bill's many published articles and books. The reason is that Virginia does not, as some suppose, share in the writing or in the basic research. Bill is a one-man assembly line, turning out a product known as North Carolina history. He decides what he wants to write, and how he wants to organize it; and when he is working on a book he operates on a rigid schedule, sitting at the typewriter most often in his office rather than at home, until he has turned out his daily quota of publishable copy. He works from notes or note-cards, often in shorthand, which he had the good sense to learn early in his career. When he lectures on North Carolina history, whether in the classroom or before a lay or professional audience, he speaks from these notes he has prepared himself, following an outline he drew up himself, and especially in the question and answer period, responding with insight from what is undoubtedly the most extensive living encyclopedia of North Carolina information.

Could he not, therefore, have made out as well had he married a cosmetologist, or a nurse, or a belly-dancer instead of Virginia Waldrop? The answer, emphatically, is "No!" When Bill Powell goes off somewhere to lecture on North Carolina history, Virginia Powell is almost always in the audience. When he visits a site of historical interest, here or abroad,

Virginia is with him. When he attends a meeting of one of the numerous commissions, or historical societies, or editorial boards of which he is a member, Virginia is there, in attendance if visitors are allowed, or waiting for him just outside the door when the meeting is ended.

There is more. Virginia is his mirror, reflecting his ideas and his plans, letting him know with clarity and insight whether what he has in mind looks good, or should be changed. She is his filing clerk, keeping in proper order all the mass of 3x5 and 4x6 note cards, xeroxed abstracts, personal reminders, partly finished manuscripts, and rough outlines of projected undertakings. She is his secretary and research assistant, checking out the library books he thinks he may need, tracking down the obscure leads he feels may have a bearing on the subject at hand, making copies of notes, answering the telephone. She is always there to handle the routine and mundane, making it possible for historian William S. Powell to turn out a prodigious quantity of definitive work.

I hope Bill realizes how fortunate he is; and on reflection I am quite certain he does. For theirs is a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, and love; as cohorts, as man and wife, as friends, and as companions. And the relationship is so close and so constant that I was not surprised recently when someone asked me if they were brother and sister; and I had to admit that, through the years, they have even begun to look alike.

Bill and Virginia Powell keep things. Bill decides what to keep. Virginia keeps it. Like most of us who are interested in history they keep pertinent books, periodicals, pamphlets, maps and other related material, including artifacts if they have some special significance. But the thing that sets them apart is that, unlike the rest of us, they have kept for thirty-three years a detailed record of their daily expenditures.

It is typical of Bill Powell that the early decision to keep a record of every penny they spent and what they spent it for, day in and day out, throughout a marriage that has produced two sons and a daughter, was for the benefit of other and future historians, rather than himself. Early in his research Bill became aware of the paucity of accurate and minutely detailed information on what people spent money for, and how much they spent for each item, and he realized that if anybody had ever taken the time to keep such records over an extended period the information would provide insight not otherwise available on people and how they lived. So, along with their wedding vows or shortly thereafter, Bill and Virginia pledged to undertake and continue such a project for so long as they both might live.

It is just this kind of attention to detail that is the first key to Bill Powell's success. Only a person with such dedication and determination would have been brazen enough to set out to produce what North Carolina and all of the other states lacked: a comprehensive, accurate, even interesting, state gazetteer. And who else in North Carolina, on his own and on the side, would then have undertaken the compilation of a *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography,* comparable in quality and historical integrity to the *DAB,* and even exceeding it in scope? That mammoth project is almost completed, with Bill providing each of some 700 contributors with basic material on their assigned subjects, then ending up writing or rewriting hundreds of the approximately 4,000 biographies.

The gazetteer and the dictionary of biography will remain as memorials to Professor William S. Powell long after he and the rest of us have departed this earth, for those two works will continue to serve as the foundation of every library of North Caroliniana. Yet they represent only a relatively small part of the contribution Bill Powell has made to our knowledge and understanding of North Carolina history.

As an author Bill has turned out so many books and articles that I have been unable to get from him or anyone else an accurate listing, or even an up-to-date count. Certainly, they total more than a hundred, of which twenty or so are books. But unlike some historian-authors, who limit their output to a single subject matter—North Carolina coastal history, for example—Bill has turned out definitive works on such diverse subjects as the Raleigh colonists, the North Carolina charter, church history, the Regulators, Governor Tryon, the colonial period, higher education, the Lords Proprietors, and Lenoir and Caswell counties.

But his books and articles are just the beginning.

If he had done nothing else, Bill's work as a bibliographer has been of sufficient importance to rank him with McMurtrie, Weeks, Thornton, and Woods and Laney as a major contributor in this important and highly specialized field. In 1952 he was co-author of *A Bibliography of North Carolina County Histories,* which he revised and updated two years later. Beginning in 1957, and for the next sixteen years, he prepared the annual *North Carolina Bibliography* for the *Historical Review.* And in 1958 he edited *North Carolina Fiction, 1734–1957, An Annotated Bibliography,* the bible for collectors of Tar Heel fiction.

Bill is much more than an author and a bibliographer.

The very first hard-bound issue of *American Heritage,* December, 1954, lists William S. Powell as the Contributing Editor responsible for history news, and in the more than three decades since then he has served as editor or editorial board member for a wide range of periodicals and publishing projects. My own involvement with Bill demonstrates the scope of this seemingly peripheral activity. In the early 1960s we served as co-chairmen of the Scholarly Activities Committee of the Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, which initiated the new Colonial Records Project and produced a series of tercentenary publications; in the late 1960s we were members of the Advisory Editorial Board for the *North Carolina Historical Review;* and beginning in 1978 we were members of the publications subcommittee of America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee—appointed, I should note, by H. G. Jones, who conceived the Four Hundredth Committee, wrote the bill establishing it, lobbied it through the General Assembly, and then chaired the committee during its formative period. Fortunately for me, Bill succeeded me as chairman of the publications subcommittee just about the time we were getting ready to publish an extensive series of books, pamphlets, and folders; and in the years since Bill has spent innumerable hours lining up authors, editing their manuscripts, and shepherding their work through the publications process.

People who have never served as editors, and have never had to deal with authors and publishers, correct manuscripts, and check proofs, can have no idea of the amount of work involved, or of the tedious, frustrating, and often boring nature of that work. Just this week, in one of his letters to me, Bill included an aside on the progress of *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography.*

> For more than a month I have been deeply involved in reading galley proof of volume two of the *DNCB.* I have read two "batches," have a third almost half finished, and the final portion is due from the Press today. I read proof at home against the manuscript, then bring both to the N.C. Collection to answer questions. Virginia then reads it to look for typos, and finally I transfer all markings to the master copy to be returned to the Press. This whole process is scheduled to be completed by July 15, if my sanity and eyesight hold out. It's amazing what questions can be raised from printed copy that you have never seen in typed copy.

Though most people know Bill Powell by his written works, there are others—many others—whose contact with him has been face to face and personal. Somehow he manages, regularly, to make talks and speeches, or read papers, before historical societies, civic clubs, and other organizations, transmitting verbally a small portion of his knowledge of North Carolina history. He has spent even more time, however, serving on commissions and as an officer or board member of other organizations whose mission is to encourage an understanding of our heritage. The list of organizations he has helped form or has headed begins with the Historical Society of North Carolina, the Literary and Historical Association, and the Society of County and Local Historians, and goes on almost interminably.

If this cursory listing of Bill Powell's accomplishments and involvements has begun to seem, in itself, interminable, I should point out that everything I have mentioned so far has been in the category of volunteer or public service activity, with nothing whatsoever about his primary mission, his salaried jobs as a curator and as a teacher, the fruits of which have made it possible for Bill and Virginia to make the daily expenditures which she records in minute detail.

Bill served for fourteen years beginning in 1958 as Curator of the North Carolina Collection here at the University. His predecessor, that lovely lady, Miss Mary Thornton, was a librarian. Bill took over the job with qualifications as both librarian, with a degree in library science, and historian, with a master's degree. With no reflection intended on the job done by Miss Mary—at whose retirement, incidentally, Bill arranged for me to have the privilege of being the speaker in ceremonies here in the Carolina Inn—it is fair to say that Bill Powell transformed the Carolina Collection from a library of books on North Carolina to one of the finest regional research facilities in America. All of us who have done serious research on North Carolina history, and any of us who have wanted to learn more about some phase of that history, have found it imperative to begin our search here. The names of John Sprunt Hill, Stephen B. Weeks, Bruce Cotten, and Mary Thornton are among those indelibly etched on the framework of this depository of information and knowledge, and

though the name of William S. Powell would appear, chronologically, at the bottom of that list, on the basis of importance Powell should be near the top.

If someone met Bill Powell for the first time and asked him what he does, the response would surely be that he teaches North Carolina history. And if someone who knows Bill asks him, as I did recently, what he considers his most meaningful and fulfilling accomplishment, his reply would be that it was in dealing, individually, with the many hundreds of students with whom he has been associated as teacher and advisor for nearly a quarter of a century.

Bill began teaching North Carolina history during the period when he served as curator of the North Carolina Collection, and in 1973 he resigned his library position to become a full professor, succeeding Hugh Lefler in teaching state history at the University. This has been Bill's primary work, taking priority over all else, and his involvement with his students has extended far beyond the classroom. Bill regularly takes his students on field trips, exposing them to the sites where events of historical significance actually took place, as his parents had taken him in an earlier era. He does his research and writing in his office, not because he can do the work better there, or because Virginia and the kids would be in the way at home, but so that he can be available whenever one of his students wants to drop by, to seek advice or the answer to a question, or just to talk about what he or she is doing, or might want to do. It is this rapport with his students, and the satisfaction of watching a young person emerging as a prospective historian, that provides Bill Powell with all of the reward he ever wants for his efforts. One result is that when others in his profession speak of Bill Powell, they often refer to him as the "historian's historian."

With this litany of prodigious accomplishment, Bill Powell seems almost to emerge as a saint in historian's garb. Are there no negatives, no regrets, in the life and work of this prolific yet unassuming man? Yes, one!

People often refer to Bill as "Dr. Powell," but they are technically in error. For, after all these years of work and accomplishment, during

which time many of his students have gone on to earn their doctoral degrees, William S. Powell's title is still just professor of history at the University of North Carolina. Periodically one hears, even as far away as the coast, rumors of displeasure, voiced in private conversation by holders of more advanced degrees in these halls of academia, over the status and stature of Professor Powell. Bill is aware of this, and regrets it, and says now that he probably should have gone on to get his doctorate, not so that he would have the title held by other tenured full professors on the faculty, but so there would be no basis for resentment on their part.

I, for one, am glad Bill did not waste the time it would have taken him to earn a doctoral degree. It would mean that one or more of his accomplishments would have been bypassed, and that he would be getting started later, and maybe too late, on the one major project he still has in mind, the compilation of a *Dictionary of North Carolina History.*

Beyond that, I am aware that in 1978 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from what was then Campbell College. That's enough for me, and it should be for others.

We salute you, Honorary Doctor William Stevens Powell.

DR. JONES:

Remember those words from the 1911 *Yackety-Yack?* "When the State requires his services, he gives them freely and cheerfully. . . ."

They describe not just Bill Powell. They apply equally to William C. Friday, who has probably chaired or been a member of more boards and commissions in North Carolina than any other person in the past half century. The last nine governors have leaned upon him, and he has influenced the course of every legislature. His stewardship of higher education in North Carolina has gained for him and our state the attention of the nation. He has served as president of the Association of American Universities, chairman of the American Council of Education, chairman of the Commission on White House Fellows, chairman of President Johnson's Task Force on Education and, ten years later, of President Carter's Task Force on Education. His is a respected voice across the land.

Here in North Carolina, he abjures the petty squabbles that divide us, and instead holds high the principle of understanding that draws the

attention of our people to the state's long tradition of progress with moderation and tolerance. In many ways, William Friday, though not a professional historian, is a missionary in the tradition of the Connors and the Powells.

President Friday.

BILL POWELL'S SERVICE TO THE STATE

By William C. Friday

In 1909 the Guilford Battle Ground Company erected a monument to the muse of history, Clio. Professor C. Alfonso Smith of the University of North Carolina gave the dedicatory address on "The Significance of History in a Democracy." It was an inherently forgettable address, but R. D. W. Connor, the secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission, printed it anyway. What makes this little booklet pertinent tonight are two quotations that Connor placed inside the front and back covers, respectively. The first read, "A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtue to make history that is worth recording." The other read, "No man is fit to be entrusted with control of the present who is ignorant of the past; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great."

This was neither the first nor last time Connor used those quotations, which help explain why he spent his career—except for five years as President Franklin Roosevelt's first Archivist of the United States—collecting, preserving, promoting, and teaching North Carolina history.

Interest in and efforts to preserve the history of our state did not begin with R. D. W. Connor—nor with his friend, J. G. deRoulhac Hamilton who, while Connor was at work in Raleigh, was building up a treasury of source materials here at Chapel Hill that in 1930 was formally named the Southern Historical Collection. In fact, Connor, Hamilton, and their contemporaries were building upon pioneer efforts of nineteenth-century North Carolinans like David L. Swain, who in 1844 organized the Historical Society of the University of North Carolina, and William L. Saunders, who edited that magnificent collection called the *Colonial Records of North Carolina*. Still, the crusading spirit of Connor and the collecting instincts of Hamilton helped usher in a twentieth-century renaissance in the study of our state's past. It is no idle boast that since the turn of the century North Carolina has done more through official state action to preserve its historical resources than any state in the Union; that the State Division of Archives and History is now the premier state historical agency of the nation; and that the enormously rich manuscript repositories and printed

collections at the University of North Carolina, Duke, East Carolina, Wake Forest, and other institutions and organizational headquarters make the state virtually a researcher's paradise.

This encouraging description of our twentieth-century historical progress can be credited only partially to the work of Connor, Hamilton, and their associates, for though they established the tradition of leadership, its continuation fell to their successors, like Albert Ray Newsome, Christopher Crittenden, James W. Patton, Hugh T. Lefler, and men and women who sit in this ballroom tonight. It is one of them that we honor with the North Caroliniana Society Award for 1985.

William Stevens Powell is the embodiment of those characteristics that fired the Connors and the Hamiltons of former generations—a North Carolinian by both birth and conviction, a collector by instinct and determination, a teacher by temperament and dedication. His interest in history was stimulated by his grandmother's eyewitness accounts of life in the nineteenth century; his happiest college hours were in history classes; his journalistic bent was turned to writing historical articles for newspapers and magazines; and his familiarity with the history and geography of the state equipped him for his first professional position as researcher in the Department of Archives and History.

Thirty-four years ago "Bill," as William Powell is universally known, came back to the University from which he had received three degrees. He was employed by Miss Mary Lindsay Thornton, that remarkable lady who, through friendship with John Sprunt Hill and the encouragement of Louis Round Wilson and successive librarians, had built an impressive body of North Caroliniana, which incidentally, was just occupying in Wilson Library fine new quarters furnished by Mr. Hill. The combination of this great collection of printed works and its Chippendale setting must have been a dream-come-true for the native of Johnston County, who grew up in Statesville, worked for a while in the Yale University's sumptuous rare book room, and now found that his own University had accorded North Caroliniana the attractive and dignified surroundings that it deserved.

For seven years Bill Powell was Miss Thornton's strong assistant, and they learned from each other. His talent for locating materials in bookshops and catalogs

was legendary, and the North Carolina Collection grew rapidly. His intimate knowledge of state history enabled him to guide researchers to obscure and seldom used sources. In 1958, William Powell succeeded Miss Thornton as head of the Collection. Building upon her accomplishments, he rapidly filled the shelves that had been provided for expansion, and before he resigned the curatorship in 1973 to become a fulltime professor of history, his acquisitions had been so numerous that the Collection had outgrown its shelves and floor space. The North Carolina Collection was even then matched in size and comprehensiveness by no other state collection of published materials in America. It has continued to grow since then and will, next year, move back into the main portion of Wilson Library with greatly expanded facilities—retaining, I am glad to say, the Chippendale atmosphere originally introduced by John Sprunt Hill.

David Stick has described Bill Powell's contributions to history, including his impressive bibliography of published books and articles. While it is true that some of a scholar's writings may be on subjects of interest largely to other academicians, it is also true that they provide resources for others who write popular history. In that regard, Bill Powell has performed a role not always adequately recognized by contemporary scholars—that of mining original manuscripts and providing in published form the resources that make it possible for others to sit in comfortable surroundings and conduct their research in indexed books. A perfect example is his *North Carolina Gazetteer,* the sort of volume that forces us to ask, "How did we get along without it?" Another is the mammoth undertaking, the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography,* the second volume of which will be out this year. How *did* we get along without them? The truth is that we simply went along, ignorant of the valuable information that they could have furnished us—information that might have affected our decisions, broadened our understanding, and enriched our work. Incidentally, Ida and I are glad that we are not included in that second volume of *DNCB,* even though it covers the F's. You see, the first criterion for inclusion is that the subject be dead!

I have mentioned but two of the extraordinary number and variety of books and articles produced by Professor Powell. His bibliography, I am told, is equalled by no other member of the Department of History, and he is now at work on, among other things, a new state history textbook. He remains unchallenged as the most prolific living writer of North Carolina history. He continues to

travel the breadth of the state, speaking to historical organizations, patriotic groups, civic clubs, and school classes. The entire citizenry is his audience, whether through his classes, speeches, or writings.

Even so, Bill Powell's influence may have been greatest among the students who have taken his courses here at the University. He estimates that since 1964 he has taught 6,000 students, including as many as 500 in a single year. His enthusiasm is contagious, and enrollment in his classes has often been limited only by capacity of the assigned classrooms. The overwhelming majority of his former students are now voting citizens of North Carolina; many of them have served in the General Assembly and in other places of leadership. All have benefitted from an increased understanding of their state through a study of its past. By extension, our entire state has been a beneficiary of this training.

History, however, has had rough going in the past two decades, both in the public schools and in higher education. For a time our obsession with presentism relegated history to virtual irrelevancy. Enrollments in history plummeted, and it became possible for a student to go through twelve years of public school and four or more years of college without ever taking a course classified as history. We are recovering from the extremes of that myopia, but I want to conclude with a special appeal for a continuation of emphasis upon the study of North Carolina history here at Chapel Hill. We cannot allow Bill Powell to be the last of a long line of influential state historians like Connor, Hamilton, Newsome, Crittenden, and Hugh Lefler. An understanding of the resources and development of our state is all the more essential in an age of rapid change, both in the composition of our population and the complexities of our times. If there be those who look upon state and local history as "provincial," beneath the dignity of scholarship for exploration and education, let me remind all of us that the University of North Carolina belongs to the taxpayers of this state and answers to them. From time to time in the past our great institution has momentarily forgotten that simple fact, and in every instance we have been brought back into line by an aroused populace. As we strive for excellence in scholarship in the eyes of the world, we must strive for excellence in service in the eyes of our own people. This university provides no service greater than that offered through an understanding of our origins, our struggles, our failures, our successes, our needs, and our potentials—an understanding that is gained

through a study of our history as taught by inspired professors such as Bill Powell.

To you, William S. Powell, I extend the thanks of the University that you have served so well the past third of a century, and of the people of North Carolina, whose heritage you have so diligently and effectively portrayed through your collecting, researching, writing, and teaching. All of us are in your debt for not fully retiring at this time, for we know that your "half-time" work for the Department of History will in fact continue to be a full-time commitment to the service of our University and our state.

DR. JONES:

If there has ever been a true "University man" in the tradition of the 1911 *Yackety-Yack,* it is Archie K. Davis who, deprived of an opportunity to enter graduate school in history as was his ambition, took a job offered him during the Depression. In more than forty years during which he rose to the very top of the banking profession (he is the only person ever to be elected president of both the American Bankers Association and the United States Chamber of Commerce) and sat on the boards of the great corporations of the country (both business and philanthropic), Archie Davis never lost his interest in history. He was a sort of roving ambassador for North Carolina and Southern history, spicing his speeches and articles with allusions to past experience.

When, in the 1970s, Archie carried out his ambition and returned to graduate school, Bill Powell and I sat on his graduate committee, and we saw a semi-retired banker outwork and outproduce students fifty years his junior. I am glad to tell you that a distillation of his enormous work on *The Boy Colonel* will be published by the UNC Press in September. Even this distillation is a big book, and I predict that it will be favorably received by both professional and general readers.

Archie Davis is such a modest man that he accepted our presidency four years ago on the strict condition that he not be selected to receive our North Caroliniana Society Award. His acceptance of reelection each year is conditioned on that promise. Though too modest to accept an award himself, he takes great pride in presenting it to others, the latest of whom is William S. Powell.

President Davis.

ARCHIE K. DAVIS:

Thank you, H. G.: friends, relatives, admirers, all honored guests gathered here this evening to pay tribute to a great North Carolinian.

To honor Bill Powell is to honor a tradition in the study of North Carolina history here at Chapel Hill that began generations ago.

The personification of this grand tradition is to be found in the lives and works of such distinguished scholars and leaders as David Lowry Swain, founder of the first historical society here in 1844; Kemp Plummer Battle, who revived in the postwar period what Governor Swain had earlier endowed with long and enthusiastic support; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, founder of the Southern Historical Collection, which is considered the finest collection of Southern manuscript material to be found anywhere; R. D. W. Connor, the first secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission, the first archivist of the United States, and professor of history at the University, who inspired a renaissance in the study of North Carolina history in the twentieth century; Albert Ray Newsome and Hugh T. Lefler, both immensely popular professors at Chapel Hill, who taught two generations of students the history of this great state; and Mary Lindsay Thornton, the first specifically named librarian of the North Carolina Collection, under whom Bill Powell served and ultimately succeeded.

In 1974, H. G. Jones succeeded Bill and now presides over the largest and most complete collection of published material on state history in America. It is only in this context that we can truly evaluate the magnitude of Bill Powell's accomplishments in a field that he so dearly loves. As teacher, researcher, writer, editor and author, there is simply no one who can match the intensity of his dedication and determination to discover as well as to uncover the past. I have had the privilege of observing him at work in the state archives at Raleigh. No bird dog in search of its quarry has ever been more relentless in pursuit or has followed a scent with keener instinct or with greater alacrity before coming to a point!

Of necessity, this must be so, for Professor Powell has always been involved simultaneously with programs, projects, and publications having to do with his beloved state of North Carolina. Obviously, time is of the essence with him—not enough of it in the present for the amount of it in the past. For instance, in 1977 alone, he published no less than "three books, continued writing on several others, and taught more than 500 students."

This is the Bill Powell whom we are privileged to honor this evening, perhaps not so much for his individual accomplishments as for his profound understanding of the sense of commonality and provincial pride that has long characterized the history of our state. He dwells more on the people and their accomplishments than on individual personalities. While North Carolina may not have produced a Washington, Franklin, or Jefferson, every generation has provided the kind of leadership and the kind of popular will that have cast North Carolina in a truly distinctive role in which a sense of progress has been tempered by moderation; a sense of pride, by appropriate humility; and a sense of pur-

pose, by understanding—truly a legacy of common good for which each succeeding generation must be eternally grateful.

It is now my privilege to present the 1985 North Caroliniana Society Award, which reads as follows:

The North Caroliniana Society,
in recognition of his public service and
of his promotion, enhancement, production, and
preservation of the literature of his native state,
presents its
North Caroliniana Society Award
to
William Stevens Powell
June 14, 1985.

RESPONSE

By William S. Powell

I am deeply grateful for the kind words said this evening about me and my work even though the whole occasion was arranged against my wishes. When I protested, H. G. Jones told me that he was determined to proceed with his plans, and that with or without my approval the North Caroliniana Society would carry on.

A few weeks ago, nevertheless, he informed me that I would be obliged to speak for at least five minutes—longer if I would. I am glad now that he overcame my objections and that he allotted me a few minutes to respond. It is gratifying, of course, that each of you is here this evening, and I do appreciate your presence and what I presume it signifies.

Nearly half a century ago when I was in the Statesville public schools a very fine English teacher, Miss Mary Thomas from Tupelo, Mississippi, had us memorize a good bit of poetry. When gathering my thoughts last Monday about what I should say tonight, a selection from Tennyson's *Ulysses* came to mind:

> All times I have enjoyed
> Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
> That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
> Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
> Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;
> For always roaming with a hungry heart
> Much have I seen and known—cities of men
> And manners, climates, councils, governments,
> Myself not least, but honored of them all—
> And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
> Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
> I am a part of all that I have met. . . .

I feel that I am, indeed, a part of all that I have met, and this evening seems a suitable time to acknowledge my indebtedness. My parents, of course, who took me on vacation and holiday trips all across the state, who saw that I did my homework, who exposed me to piano and art lessons even though

I had talent for neither yet came to appreciate both. My parents also, largely by example, tried to demonstrate the importance of being polite, considerate of others, and modest. These are traits I have not always succeeded in demonstrating, however.

A favorite uncle and my father took my sister and me and some cousins on Sunday afternoon walks across fields and pastures and through woods, and taught us the names of trees, shrubs, vines, and wild plants; identified birds, snakes, frogs, toads, and other creatures. Cousins in both ends of the state with whom I went to check rabbit hollows on cold, frosty mornings, or hunted squirrels, possums, or wild turkeys (in Sampson County), or went fishing. Confederate veterans and Spanish-American War veterans with whom I talked on the courthouse porch. Blacks who had been born into slavery were not reluctant to speak to me of their youth—especially an ancient, loving couple who recalled my great-grandfather who had been their "master." My recollection of these people and perhaps a dozen black children with whom my contemporaries and I played—and my mother's firm instructions that I should never be less polite to a black person than he was to me—have been important to me all my life.

David Stick has already mentioned my grandmother; she was born in 1851 and went to a school under John G. Eliot, UNC 1822, a teacher whom she often quoted to me. She was clearly determined that I should know things that she knew from the past. In the summer when I was nine she must have decided that the time had come to demonstrate certain things for me. Recalling what she had seen in her own childhood, she had me help her make a big pot of lye soap; we ground up an awful lot of peanuts and made peanut butter; she carded some wool and showed me how it was spun; we peeled some apples and dried them in the sun on top of the woodshed; and she scrubbed some black iron skillets in the sand. She opened three large trunks in the upstairs hall and showed me treasured linens, photographs and tintypes, souvenirs from long-ago trips, a pair of gold earrings made for her by one of her father's slaves, fancy buttons, and other assorted mementos. These I had seen several times before, of course, but this showing was special. The next year, on Mother's Day afternoon, she died peacefully.

My western grandfather whom I admired very much never seemed to "work" as most other men did, yet he was always busy. He fancied himself something

of a politician and held minor local offices. I sometimes went with him when he "politicked" and on election day I was at the polls nearly all day and at night when ballots were being counted. This grandfather had an antiques shop but he didn't seem to keep regular hours there—he had the wife of the man who rented his farm open up when customers arrived. One customer whom he always tried to serve himself, however, was Mrs. Maude Moore Latham of Greensboro. As early as the 1930s she was buying fine pieces of furniture for her dream—the restoration of Tryon Palace, and she would talk to me about this when I happended to be underfoot.

Another friend of my grandfather's who seemed to me to be idle a good bit of the time was Clarence Boshamer of Statesville, father of Cary Boshamer who gave the baseball stadium to the University. While Mr. Boshamer and my grandfather sat under the mimosa trees in the front yard and talked, Mr. Boshamer's chauffeur sometimes took me to ride in his electric automobile. For his shop my grandfather often bought chests of drawers, desks, trunks, and other pieces in which the former owner had left pamphlets, letters, broadsides, documents, and other things, some with big wax seals. Early on it became my delight to rummage through these pieces and beg for whatever caught my fancy. Quite a few interesting things that I rescued have now found their way to the library here and to the State Archives in Raleigh. Needless to say, I still have some, and my collection of early United States and Confederate stamps is considerably larger than it otherwise might have been.

From all of these people (and others as well) I learned various obscure and often useless things. Perhaps much of this is the kind of thing real professional historians say make one an "antiquarian" rather than a historian. Nevertheless, occasionally I mention something of this kind of thing in class. At the conclusion of a semester one time a student thanked for the "nickel knowledge" he had picked up from me.

It probably would be impossible to draw up a complete list of the people from whom I have drawn information, ideas, examples, and even inspiration. Be that as it may, this evening I am moved to cite just a few. Nancy Blair Eliason, my high school biology teacher who later became a college professor and who still lives in the state, expanded upon what I had already learned on those Sun-

day afternoon walks. She was one of the best informed and most inspiring teachers I ever had. But no wonder—she holds two degrees from the University of North Carolina.

In college I cannot recall a single teacher who wasn't knowledgeable and enthusiastic. One of them terrified me, however, with his vast learning and his gruff mannerisms. When I had to go to Professor Howard Beale's office to make an oral book report or to his house for tea (which he required of every student), I didn't sleep the night before and couldn't eat all day. I finally concluded that he was a professional New England Yankee who was trying to intimidate backwoods Southern boys. It didn't take me long to learn an important lesson in his class: not to take another one.

In other classes I was in what a farm boy would have called "hog heaven." Hugh Lefler (from Davie County) and Ray Newsome (from Union County) were at the top of my list. Both taught North Carolina history and I had both of them. Lefler also taught the colonial period of American history and Newsome taught the Federal period, and I took both. They were "tops" in the classroom and out.

As a senior I took the reference course in the School of Library Science as an elective. Although it was unusual for an undergraduate to appear in a professional school, Professor Lucile Kelling made me feel quite comfortable—in fact she took a special interest in my work. Her course was both challenging and rewarding. It introduced me to hundreds of books that have served me well during over forty years of research and writing. Miss Kelling (now Mrs. Archibald Henderson) still lives in Chapel Hill, and we frequently enjoy long chats about old times in the Village.

When I came back to graduate school after World War II, R. D. W. Connor had also returned following his service in Washington as the first Archivist of the United States. His course on the early colonial period was a model for organization and clarity not approached by any instructor that I have known—before or since. He was a friend to all of his students, and was himself a link to the past for us. One of his books had been used in my fourth grade North Carolina history class and I already held him in awe even before I met him.

Without dwelling at length on details, I must say that I learned more from (and am quite deeply indebted to) several other people than they realized—in fact several of them probably never sorted me out from dozens of others on their class rolls. E. J. Woodhouse and "Chick" Harland were noted for their "crip" courses—but I credit one for such understanding of municipal government as I have and the other for my appreciation of the King Tut exhibition that

I saw a few years ago. And I still can tell for whom the three pyramids were built, and I recognize pictures of the Ishtar Gate when I see them. L. R. Wilson, Hunt Hobbs, Howard Munch all have a place in my heart, and things I learned from them surface in my mind upon demand. If some of my students some time in the future should say the same about me I would feel well rewarded.

I never had classes with Frank Graham, Archibald Henderson, Roulhac Hamilton, Jim Patton, or Rupert Vance, but I did know them later. I believe they found me a willing listener, and my impression was that they enjoyed talking. Dr. Frank and I sat on the nearest convenient stone wall frequently when we met on campus and I called on him at the Nags Head cottage occasionally, especially to talk about the Lost Colony. Dr. Hamilton and Dr. Patton both had endless stores of facts about people they had known, as well as humorous anecdotes about famous, infamous, or imaginary people and events. Dr. Henderson and I never talked about mathematics, of course, but we did talk about North Carolina people and history.

Chris Crittenden falls into a very special category. He became my "boss" first, and then my friend. He was as effective a teacher outside the classroom, which is where I knew him, just as he must have been in one. He taught me many valuable lessons.

My friend Albert Coates defies classification. He grew up on a Johnston County farm near where I was born, and he knew my grandfather. (My father told me stories about Albert as a child in the neighborhood that I have never had the audacity to repeat to Mr. Coates.) He has befriended me on many occasions, urged me to do certain things, and he knows the variety of topics we have discussed to my advantage.

Because of things I learned from these and other men and women, for what their examples have meant to me, and for their confidence over a long period of time, I feel justified in adopting the words of Ulysses, as Tennyson expressed them, as if they were my own: "I *am* am a part of all that I have met." Nevertheless, as you have often read in the foreword to books, I must absolve them all of any blame for my errors, omissions, and failures—I am responsible for all of them myself.

For the past thirty-three years this very day, my most faithful assistant as well as my most valued critic has been my wife, Virginia. She was an English and history major in college and afterwards earned a degree in library science. No historian could ask for better preparation in a co-worker. Although she did not find me (it was in the State Archives in Raleigh that we met) until twenty-one years later, she was born the same year my grandmother died. I have often thought about that coincidence.

In reflecting upon my life I feel a sense of gratitude that God in His wisdom chose to place me in North Carolina at this particular time. With adequate Divine guidance I might have been content in North Dakota or some other place, but only if I were kept totally ignorant of North Carolina. To have lived at some other *time* might have been bearable—the 17th century perhaps would have pleased me—but I would have yearned for electric lights, plumbing, and central heat if I could have imagined them. Instead, I think I have been placed in the best of places at the best of times, and with the best of people. Everywhere I have lived, I have enjoyed good neighbors. I grew up with congenial playmates, made some lasting friends at the University as well as in the army, have been most fortunate in my professional associates, and enjoy the love and support of numerous close and distant relatives.

Although it is not entirely appropriate to this occasion, I should like to conclude my self-revelation in this quadricentennial period with another brief poem that Miss Thomas had us memorize. It was written by Sir Walter Raleigh the night before he was beheaded.

Even such is time which takes in trust
Our youth, our Joyes, and all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust:
Who in the darke and silent grave
When we have wandered all our ways
Shuts up the story of our days.
And from which earth and grave and dust
The Lord shall raise me up I trust.

Thank you for honoring me tonight. Tomorrow in the clear light of day I hope you will forgive me for prolonging this occasion unduly.

DR. JONES:

Thank you, Bill Powell, for allowing us to twist your arm and for giving us this evening with you, Virginia, and your family.

There are but two unfinished items.

First, on behalf of the staff of the North Carolina Collection, I want to present to Bill a little memento. Appropriately, it comes not with a ribbon but with a rubber band. It is a set of the catalog cards filed under the name "Powell, William Stevens, 1919– ." May that space after the hyphen remain blank for decades to come, and may our file drawers continue to grow with cards indicating your further publishing record.

And finally, as always, Virginia, his strong support and assistant, has sat here quietly and nodded in assent as we have paid tribute to William S. Powell, historian. So that you may have just a little something to take home tonight, will you, Virginia, join Bill as we bring out a very modest cake, without candles but with our congratulations on your thirty-third wedding anniversary, and will the audience rise and sing "Happy Anniversary" to Bill and Virginia.

Thank you all for coming.

APPENDIXES

A Small Payment on N.C.'s Debt to Bill Powell

By Jack Claiborne
Associate Editor

[The following article is reprinted with permission from the *Charlotte Observer,* 19 June 1985.]

If his only book were *The North Carolina Gazetteer,* North Carolinians would still owe William S. Powell a tremendous debt. The paperback, subtitled "A Dictionary of Tar Heel Places," is an invaluable guide to more than 20,000 cities, counties, towns, villages and other landmarks that dot North Carolina from the mountains to the sea. It can help the hurried reader differentiate between Lenoir city in the west and Lenoir County in the east, or distinguish the town of Wadesboro from the village of Wadeville, or locate such picturesque places as Devil's Elbow, Bear Grass, Pigeon River or Coldass Creek. The *Gazetteer* alone amounts to a prodigious piece of scholarship.

But the 300 people who gathered in the banquet hall in Chapel Hill's Carolina Inn last Friday night were honoring Bill Powell for a lot more than that. They were honoring him for more than 30 years of labor that has produced a staggering array of books, pamphlets, articles, dictionaries, bibliographies and commentaries on life and times in North Carolina.

Diverse Works

They were honoring him for such diverse works as the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (containing sketches of more than 7,000 notable North Carolinians), for editing and annotating the letters of Royal Gov. William Tryon (in two volumes), for researching and writing the histories of two counties (Caswell and Lenoir) and the biographies of two early Carolinians (Moses Curtis and John Pory), for compiling documentary histories of the Albemarle settlement and the Revolution Regulator move-

ment, for a pictorial history of UNC-Chapel Hill, for pamphlets on the Carolina Charter of 1663 and on the eight lords proprietors, for a monograph on the development of higher education in the state, for a history of St. Luke's Episcopal Church at Salisbury, for a history of the Roanoke Island Historical Association, for a look at reading tastes in North Carolina from 1730 to 1850, for an annotated bibliography of N.C. fiction, for a history of North Carolina in colonial times, for a bicentennial history of North Carolina, and, finally, for teaching N.C. history to more than 6,000 students from 1964 until 1985.

If there is such a thing as a "Mr. North Carolina History," Bill Powell is it. His works fill several inches in the author's card catalogue in the UNC Library, and his classes have been among the most popular offered in the UNC History Department. But Mr. Powell is retiring this spring from full-time teaching, and his friends in the North Caroliniana Society wanted to make sure he was given an appropriate send-off. They presented him the society's annual distinguished service award, an honor that previously had gone to such luminaries as playwright Paul Green, Institute of Government founder Albert Coates, former Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr., UNC President William Friday and his wife, Ida, Tryon Palace preservationist Gertrude Carraway and poet laureate Sam Ragan.

The main speaker was David Stick of Manteo, the Outer Banks historian who was one of Mr. Powell's classmates at Chapel Hill in the late 1930s. He said Bill Powell was perhaps the only man in North Carolina who could cross the state and spend a night in every county, either at the home of a former student or of a moderator at whose meeting Mr. Powell had once spoken, usually without honorarium or even money for gasoline.

After Mr. Stick came President Friday, who, after praising Bill Powell's contribution to the state and the university, noted that under current plans his chair in the UNC History Department might not be filled, that there is a move underway to deemphasize N.C. history as unworthy of a great university. Mr. Friday wanted it known that he was not in sympathy with such efforts.

"We cannot allow Bill Powell to be the last of a long line of influential N.C. historians," he said, and issued what he called "an appeal" for renewed study of this state, its people, institutions and development. His remarks drew sustained applause.

Following Bill Friday came banker Archie Davis, who, after his retirement as chairman of Wachovia Bank and Trust Co., returned to UNC

to renew his studies of state history. As president of the North Caroliniana Society, he presented Bill Powell the annual service award. The citation included the fact that in one year, Prof. Powell had published three books, was at work on several more, contributed articles to several scholarly journals and still managed to teach more than 500 students.

The Best Was Last

But the best performance of the evening came from Bill Powell himself, who said, that, like Ulysses in Tennyson's poem, he was a part of all whom he had met. He talked movingly about the people who had shaped his life and work, beginning with his grandmother, Edith Millard Powell. She taught him to dry apples in the sun, to scrub pots with sand, to identify the plants and animals on her Duplin County farm—and to be curious about the past. She had lived through the Civil War and Reconstruction and wanted her grandson to know what that was all about.

He talked about his parents, Isaac and Ada Powell of Statesville, who on holiday and vacation trips had exposed their children to historic sites in the state; about Nancy Blair Eliason, a biology teacher at Statesville High who took her students into the fields to examine life and the conditions that made it possible; and finally about R. D. W. Connor, Hugh Lefler, Ray Newsome and Christopher Crittenden, who had preceded him as N.C. historians. He said he rarely sat down to write without thinking of those people, about a specific idea or concept they had taught him.

The evening was, on the whole, a demonstration of the value of history, a testimonial to its impact on our lives and attitudes, as a means of understanding the culture that we have inherited and of our obligation to preserve and pass on that understanding.

It was, in sum, another item in our mounting debt to Bill Powell.

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